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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR MAY 31, 2005

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for May 31, 2005. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

SABAH (GUNEY) / BOLGE / OZGUR GUNDEM / EKSPRES / ZAMAN:
Chief of Staff Hilmi Ozkok with other senior military officials paid visits to Mersin Governor Atilla Osmancelebioglu, Mayor Macit Ozcan and Mediterranean Regional and Garrison Command.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Last week Turkey and Iran reportedly agreed to cooperate and conduct joint military operations against the PKK/Kongra-Gel terrorist organization. Meanwhile, the paper claims that three soldiers in Diyarbakir died in an ambush set by terrorists.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Two DEHAP (Democratic People's Party) provincial officials in Malatya were sentenced to six months in jail for allegedly allowing a Kurdish song to be performed at the Provincial Party Congress in April 2003 in Malatya; the prison sentence has been converted to a fine.

OZGUR GUNDEM: European Commission's Turkey Representative Hans Jorg Kretschmer said, "Leyle Zana and her friends should put a plain distance between themselves and the PKK." Former DEP (Democratic Party) deputy and currently DTH (Democratic Society Movement) Coordination member Orhan Dogan, in response to Kretschmer's remarks, said in a speech in Diyarbakir that the EU condemned ETA as a terrorist organization, yet "Spain started to discuss the matter with ETA. Isn't this part of an EU policy?"

CUMHURIYET / OZGUR GUNDEM / ZAMAN: A sabotage attempt using explosives damaged a section of the Batman oil pipeline and 50 barrels of oil leaked out. The firefighters of the state-run TPAO (Turkish Petroleum Joint Stock Company) extinguished the fire that followed the explosion. Ozgur Gundem reports that the PKK allegedly claimed responsibility for the explosion and that the amount of barrels leaked was a hundred.

CUMHURIYET: Eleven years after the 1994 military operations in Tunceli which resulted in the alleged disappearance of seven people, the Tunceli Chief Prosecutor's office along with the Jandarma Commander are looking in the case, by conducting a study around the Mirig hamlet of Tunceli. Their action is in response to the demand of the attorney of allegedly disappeared persons' families.

ZAMAN: Sami Comak (31), alleged to be the logistics overseer of the PKK, reportedly died as a result of snakebite in a rural area of Tunceli. According to the Governor of Tunceli, security forces are searching for the body of the terrorist. The paper reported that there is a serious shortage of medicine against snake and scorpion bites in the PKK terrorist organization.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

1. SABAH (GUNEY) / EKSPRES / ZAMAN / BOLGE: A commercial delegation came to Adana from Holland to promote commercial ties between Holland and Turkey. The delegation paid a visit to Adana Municipality and then to Adana's Chamber of Industry (ACI). ACI Chairperson Ozgumus said that they would host another Dutch delegation in late September and that Holland plans to open a commercial bureau in Adana.

2. SABAH (GUNEY) / BOLGE: After Russia's decision to stop buying vegetables and fruit from Turkey, prices are reportedly falling sharply in the Turkish internal markets and the producers are experiencing hardships.

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